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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8049  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0432  
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0354  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0412  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 1954  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0750  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0044  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0477  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0858

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 000072

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DS/IP/RD, DS/IP/AF, AF/W

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [MR](#)  
SUBJECT: EAC MEETS TO DISCUSS PRESIDENT ABDALLAHI'S  
TROUBLED RETURN

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for  
reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (SBU) President Abdallahi, who was "released without condition" by General Aziz on December 21, is being prevented today from returning to Nouakchott with his supporters. Abdallahi's spokesmen have announced that the President intends to make a policy announcement laying out an alternative exit strategy than that put forward by General Aziz. As of 13:00 local, the President and a motorcade of 15 vehicles were being blocked by police some 30 miles from Nouakchott. According to President Abdallahi's Chief of Staff, the President had been told by the police that they had instructions to allow only the President's vehicle to pass and not to permit his entourage to advance. A separate group of Abdallahi supporters including the presidents of political parties are being held 15 miles from the city and being prevented from joining up with the president. Mission personnel have observed additional police being quickly deployed throughout the city. The Chief of Staff told Charge they have not decided what to do if the impasse continues.

¶2. (C) Charge telephoned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretary General to register U.S. concern and encourage the authorities to allow the President and his supporters to enter the city. Charge noted that the blockage runs contrary to General Aziz' statement of December 21 that the President was being released without condition. Charge also noted that the regime's actions undercut their claim that the President was free to participate in the political process. The Secretary General undertook to immediately pass on U.S. concerns.

¶3. (C) Charge convened the EAC to discuss the situation. The EAC agreed that there was a heightened risk of pro- and anti-Abdallahi demonstrations related to the President's attempted return to the city. The EAC agreed that the U.S. Mission and American citizens were not likely to be targets of these demonstrations; however, the risk exists of being caught in the middle of a spontaneous demonstration. The EAC agreed to immediately issue a Consular Warden Message alerting American citizens of the possibility of demonstrations. Mission personnel were advised to monitor their radios for any changes in the security situation over the weekend.

14. (C) Charge is scheduled to attend a diplomatic briefing at President Abdallahi's Nouakchott residence at 16:00 on Friday. Assuming the President makes it to Nouakchott, the Charge will attend.

HANKINS